

Request for Information (RFI)

DARPA-SN-10-27

Mobile Apps for the Military



In today's military, handheld systems are characterized by a tight integration of specialized hardware with a narrowly focused software suite. Most of the handheld devices are heavily optimized for a particular task and are ill-suited for general-purpose use. A soldier's radio, for example, has very limited data capability and essentially no multimedia capability. Current language translation devices support neither messaging nor collaboration of any form. This inflexibility in function is further exacerbated by the military's own acquisition process, a process that can take years to complete and involves an unwieldy linear process of formal requirements definition, technology development, and system certification. The current process adds considerable costs and introduces schedule delays to the deployment of new, cutting-edge technologies. Furthermore, there is a real risk that these very technologies will be obsolete by the time they are in the warfighter's hands.

A transformation in technical approaches and business processes is called for. DARPA seeks to overcome current limitations and give our military ready access to the leading edge capabilities.

As envisioned by DARPA, this transformation will:

- Result in the rapid development of applications and system enhancements that keep up with the fluid demands of warfighter on the ever-changing battlefield;
- Demonstrate both affordability and scalability that enable pervasive use, targeted especially among the end-users at lower levels in the military echelon;
- Encourage and support open competition among a broad set of suppliers in the military applications development process; and
- Support new business models and streamlined processes to incentivize a broad community of suppliers.

The primary purpose of this RFI is to discover sources of commercial and non-commercial apps with potential relevance to the military specifically and the national security community more generally. These apps may be used in situations such as the

tactical battlefield, for humanitarian assistance, and in disaster recovery efforts. DARPA's initial interest will focus on apps developed on the iPhone or Android platforms that can be used today with little or no additional research and development expenses. Application providers may already have offerings in the commercial marketplace that could be adapted to meet these needs.

In order to meet this objective, DARPA extends an invitation to the developers of currently existing apps encouraging them to submit a whitepaper about their product offerings. The whitepaper should include the following:

- Team Bio
 - A brief summary of the company/team including prior/alternate work, and the team's ability to support future maintenance work;
 - The background on each member of the development team; and
 - Ability and willingness to add/extend current functionality to meet unique military needs.
- Application Name & Description
 - Origin/history of the application. Be sure to indicate any change in source ownership if applicable and any other conditions in which full IP ownership is not held;
 - Characterize the application as a stand-alone (no network), synchronized, (intermittent connectivity), or fully networked application. Frequency of synchronization or needed bandwidth, if appropriate;
 - Also include the design of the application, including the front end, back end if applicable, any synchronization mechanisms, any network architecture if appropriate, and the security model;
 - If the application is currently live on an App Store, provide links for purchasing, the product webpage, and other relevant information;
 - If the application is not marketed, provide current status and roadmap; and
 - Provide current pricing (see below).

DARPA's objective is to identify apps suitable for widespread use by military personnel. The potential install base is a hundred thousand to a million or more end-users. Additionally, the DoD may require ownership and maintenance of required servers for the applications.

A pricing model that takes into consideration both the size of the potential installation base as well as the need for the server code should be determined. This could be

accomplished using a “per-download” cost if appropriate, as well as by using enterprise or site-license options.

Application providers may also desire to provide DARPA with a copy of one or more of their apps under limited license for evaluation purposes. If this is desired, please be sure to include access instructions and any specific hardware requirements as needed.

Prior to any widespread use, all application and server source code pertaining to the application is subjected to a security review. Any providers that would like to submit their source code for evaluation in advance are welcome to do so. Please provide the URL and any login credentials required to download a zipfile containing any relevant source code on the contact sheet.

Note that DARPA is also publishing BAA 10-41 for the Transformative Apps program, soliciting R&D proposals.

FORMAT

White papers should be in the following format:

- a) A one page cover sheet that identifies the contact information including the title, organization, responder's points of contact (names, addresses, phone number, and email addresses);
- b) Microsoft PowerPoint slides, not to exceed three slides, summarizing key aspects of the response; and
- c) Microsoft Word or PDF file, 12-point font, not to exceed four pages, describing the response.

SUBMISSION

Responses to this RFI should be submitted to DARPA-SN-10-27@darpa.mil. All RFI responses will be accepted starting 1200 noon (ET), 15 March 2010 through 1200 noon (ET), 26 March 2010. Please refer to the "Mobile Apps for the Military" in all correspondence. All technical and administrative correspondence and questions regarding this announcement should also be submitted to the same email address.

DISCLAIMER

This is an RFI issued solely for information gathering purposes; this RFI does not constitute a formal solicitation for proposals or abstracts. In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. DARPA will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. Submission of a white paper is not required to

propose to Broad Agency Announcements or research announcements on this topic. **No classified information should be included in the RFI response.** Respondents are advised that DARPA is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted under this RFI. Responses to this RFI do not bind DARPA to any further actions related to this topic including requesting follow-on proposals from vendors responding to this RFI.

White paper submissions containing proprietary data should have the cover page and each page containing proprietary data clearly marked as containing “proprietary” data. It is the proposer’s responsibility to clearly define to the Government what is considered proprietary data.

POINT OF CONTACT

Dr. Mari Maeda, Program Manager, DARPA, Email DARPA-SN-10-27@darpa.mil. Any inquiries on this RFI must be submitted to this email. No telephone inquiries will be accepted.